THE HERMITAGE CHAPEL – Liturgical & religious artwork

**Artist:** Mark Weichard, Orchard Studios

**Madonna Sculpture**

**Materials:** Huon Pine, stainless steel, Artglass panels, gold leaf.

**Artists Comments:** The core of the artists brief given to me by the brothers at the start of this project was, to use the artworks to attempt to capture the Marial Spirit and present this in a way that helped others understand their devotion to the Madonna and its central place within their lives both as individuals and as community. The Madonna Shrine seeks to help us begin our journey of understanding into this central relationship within our Catholic Faith. The piece is intended to work on a number of levels, beginning with the relationship of this mother for this child. But through this and our understanding of the momentous events which were surrounding them, we can begin to appreciate the depth of feeling contained within the gaze of the Madonna as she holds the Christ child. Cloaking the figure is the blue of her veil and the traditional gold leaf braiding of classical European church art and beyond this again the earth lines of Australian tribal art and contemporary sculpted forms in stainless steel and glass. The shrine both protects the Tabernacle and invites us to enter through her into the Sacred Space of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, the place where the living presence of her son dwells.

**Sanctuary Windows**

**Materials:** Individually applied sandblast ‘resist’ medium, over toughened light blue-grey proprietary glass

**Artists Comment:** These important windows are intended to provide visual privacy within the Chapel sacred space while also allowing the viewer to look out and contemplate the beautiful Mittagong landscape. These windows carry the Marian colour of blue and relate closely to both the glass of the Madonna Shrine, the Altar and the Tabernacle. They complete the Sacred Space by enclosing the viewer within the folds of a blue veil.

**Altar & Ambo**

**Materials:** Tasmanian Myrtle, stainless steel, Tasmanian Huon Pine, Art glass panels, Gold leaf.

**Artists Comment:** Designed to be visually strong, while at the same time allowing it to appear transparent. The art glass panels complete the fabric of these pieces, while also allowing the viewer to see through it to what lies beyond. It is intended to take up a strong presence within the sacred space, while also reading as light and ethereal.

**Presider’s Chair**

**Materials:** Tasmanian Myrtle –Veneer and solid timber, Leather and gold leaf.
Comment: This piece is connected to the Sanctuary suite, but offers a different interpretation of how to construct with these materials. Using a contemporary curved veneer shell as the structural mainstay of the work, the ancillary components are arranged around this central component. More like a sculptural exercise than a furniture project, this piece looks dynamic, but is still comfortable to sit in.

Tabernacle

Materials: Timber, stainless steel, cast bronze.

Artists Comments: Along with the Madonna Shrine, this work carries the sacredness of the Chapel space and is intended to work closely with the Madonna Shrine. The work is unusual in that it both houses the blessed sacrament and displays the host within a custom made monstrance which is part of the ceiling of the Tabernacle itself. The Tabernacle sits within a custom built enclosure which seeks to further enhance the visitors experience of the sacred within this holy place. The polished stainless steel case is fronted by cast bronze panels and a polished brass cross detail. Centrally located on the wall behind the Tabernacle is the art-glass panels of the Sanctuary Lamp. The red glass of the lamp glows from beneath the blue glass panel of the Madonna, thus we are drawn to approach the mystery of the Messiah through the life and devotion of his mother.

Processional Cross

Materials: Mirror polished Stainless, Timber.

Artists Comments: This work relates closely to the central Crucifix, echoing the main features of this piece while extending the contemporary design parameters involved in the original. The materials relate closely to those of the original crucifix, but are used in the processional cross to capture the impression of the ‘Marial’ spirit.

Crucifix


Artists Comments: Along with the Madonna Shrine, this work carries the main ‘sacred image’ responsibility for the Chapel renovation project. This contemporary work uses the blue stained timber to lead the viewer to the figure of Christ through the symbol of his mother. But this is not the slumped figure defeated by the cross, this is a dynamic figure which is at once held by the wood of the cross, but also released and supported by it as the cross is transformed into an instrument of resurrection. The contemporary metal sculpture surrounds the figure carved into a large solid section of rare Huon Pine. The metal reflects the light and is intended to represent the release of the spirit at resurrection. Between them, the metal of the cross and the wood of the sculpted figure attempt to capture the paradox of our humanity, an eternal spirit wrapped within our temporary earthly existence.